

are obviously metaphors of participating in and benefitting from the results of His sacrifice for human sin (John 6:54-56, 58). However, Yeshua has referred to His activity via the title of the Son of Man, of Him being the One brought before the Ancient of Days in Heaven, to whom all of Creation must pay homage in worship (Daniel 7:13-14). Indeed, Yeshua's once having been in Heaven is affirmed in the words He will later issue to His Disciples, wondering about His statements: "What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?" (John 6:62).

When it is recognized that not only is Yeshua the One in whom eternal life is found, but that one must partake of His beaten body and shed blood to be redeemed—then as the Daniel 7:13-14 Son of Man coming from Heaven to Earth, the gravity of what He has provided for human beings, can only be intensified. *Yeshua is no mere supernatural agent; Yeshua is the "I am bread of eternal life."* At the same time, Yeshua came to the Earth, was born as a human, and in His humility as a human relied entirely on His Father in Heaven for everything. As He told those at Capernaum, "Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so the one who eats of Me will also live because of Me" (John 6:57, TLV). Michaels concludes that for John 6:57, "The meaning suggested by the context is that Jesus lives his life on earth from day to day in dependence on the Father, while the disciple, in turn, lives in daily dependence on Jesus."¹²⁰ Yeshua being in complete reliance upon His Heavenly Father in His human Incarnation—with His followers also being required to live the same way, "because of Me" (*di eme*, δι' ἐμέ)—highlights the uniqueness of Yeshua's service. Yeshua is not just the Daniel 7:13-14 exalted Son of Man; Yeshua demonstrates what it means to be truly human to His followers, via a supreme service which will culminate in His death.

John 6:60-69

"Yeshua's Disciples Recognize Him as the Holy One of God"

"Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this* said, 'This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?' But Yeshua, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, 'Does this cause you to stumble? *What* then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Yeshua knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. And He was saying, 'For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.' As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. So Yeshua said to the twelve, 'You do not want to go away also, do you?' Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.'"

Upon encountering the discussion that their Master Yeshua had at the synagogue at Capernaum (John 6:41-59), it is clear that His Disciples were having to process a great deal, as it concerned not only the mission, but also the identity, of who they were following. As it is narrated, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" (John 6:60, RSV) or "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" (NIV). The discussion between the Disciples obviously got heated a bit, as they were arguing among themselves (John 6:61a), and so Yeshua asked them some direct questions: "Does this offend you? Then what if you see the Son of Man going back up to the place where He was before?" (John 6:61b-62, TLV).

¹²⁰ J. Ramsey Michaels, *New International Biblical Commentary: John* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 119.

The Nature of Yeshua in the Gospel of John

The statement of Yeshua in John 6:62, invoking the scene of the Daniel 7:13-14 exalted Son of Man, and seeing the source text communicate *hopou ēn to proteron* (ὅπου ἦν τὸ πρότερον) or “where he was – at first” (Brown and Comfort),¹²¹ must have been very compelling for the Disciples to have heard. As Morris indicates, “‘where he was before’ implies Christ’s pre-existence. It is one and the same Person who was with the Father, who became incarnate, and would in due course return whence He came.”¹²² Yeshua has unambiguously associated Himself here with a figure of supreme authority, pre-existent in Heaven: “He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (Daniel 7:14, NIV). However, in view of what has previously been said about eternal life only being accessible via partaking of the Messiah’s beaten body and shed blood (John 6:53-56, 58), recognizing Yeshua as the Daniel 7:13-14 Son of Man would not fully come to the Disciples until they saw Him resurrected from the dead and ascending into Heaven. Carson draws out the following, key points:

“The hour when the Servant of the Lord is despised and rejected by men, when he is pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (Is. 53:3-5) is the very portal to the time when ‘he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted’ (Is. 52:13)...Other religious leaders were said to have ascended to heaven at the end of their life, but Jesus the Son of Man (the title especially connected with his function as the revealer from heaven) first *descended*...and so in ascending is merely returning to *where he was before* (cf. 17:5). This not only affirms Jesus’ pre-existence, but places him in a class quite different from antecedent Jewish religious heroes.”¹²³

Yeshua focuses the attention of His Disciples onto the spiritual nature of His teachings and actions, yet realizing that there were some present who did not believe (John 6:63-64), and were not granted the ability to do so (John 6:65). It is detailed how many followers withdrew from Yeshua (John 6:66), and so He questions the Twelve, “You do not want to leave too, do you?” (John 6:67, NIV). Simon Peter astutely responded to Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life!” (John 6:68, TLV), a certain affirmation that the Twelve Disciples recognize Yeshua as the Messiah, a sure Agent sent from God the Father with a critical message of importance for both them and the Jewish community. Peter follows up his statement with, “We have trusted, and we know that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:69, CJB/CJSB).

Proponents of a low Christology of Yeshua the Messiah being a supernatural, albeit created, entity, would look at Peter’s declaration of Yeshua being “God’s Holy One” (Contemporary English Versions) in John 6:69, as evidence in favor of Yeshua not being God, integrated into the Divine Identity, but still being quite special.

But let us not overlook at what has just occurred in the scene of John 6:60-69. Yeshua has said some hard words (John 6:60), and has asked His followers how they will react to them seeing Him as the exalted Son of Man (John 6:61-62; Daniel 7:13-14). As a consequence of the faithlessness of many not believing in what He has told them, it is recorded, “From that moment many of His disciples turned back and no longer accompanied Him” (John 6:66, HCSB). Given the huge dismissal of Yeshua by many previous disciples—and the likelihood of even a number of the Twelve, excluding Judas Iscariot (John 6:71), entertaining doubts—that Peter would exclaim Yeshua to be “the Holy One of God” in John 6:69 was very serious.

¹²¹ Brown and Comfort, 344.

¹²² Morris, *John*, 384.

¹²³ Carson, *John*, 301.

Declaring Yeshua to be “the Holy One of God” (*ho hagios tou Theou*, ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ; Delitzsch Heb. NT *qedosh Elohim*, קְדוֹשׁ אֱלֹהִים), as surely agreed upon with proponents of a low Christology, would be a title *greater than* calling Yeshua *the Messiah*. However, it cannot go unnoticed how various commentators have concluded that Yeshua being called “the Holy One of God” places His nature within the sphere of the Divine, given various Tanach usages of “Holy One of Israel” as a title for the LORD or YHWH:

- Leon Morris: “It is rare in the Old Testament (used of Aaron in Ps. 106:16 and cf. ‘thy holy one’, Ps. 16:10), but it does remind us of the frequently occurring ‘the Holy One of Israel’. There can be not the slightest doubt that the title is meant to assign to Jesus the highest possible place. It stresses His consecration and His purity. It sets Him with God and not man.”¹²⁴
- Colin G. Kruse: “In the OT Yahweh is frequently referred as ‘the Holy One’ (Is. 40:25; 43:15; Hab. 1:12; 3:3) or ‘the Holy One of Israel’ (Ps. 71:22; Is. 12:6; 30:12, 15; 41:20; 43:3, 14; 45:11; 48:17; 49:7 [2x]). Most of these references are found in Isaiah and it may be that the prophet’s vision of the Lord in the temple (Is. 6:1-4) lies behind his references to God as ‘the Holy One’ and ‘the Holy One of Israel’. If so, these titles reflect the awesome majesty, glory and purity of the Lord...[W]hen Peter confessed Jesus as ‘the Holy One of God’, it was a positive and willing recognition that Jesus, as the authoritative agent of God, had the authority and power to bestow eternal life on those who believed.”¹²⁵
- Gary M. Burge: “[I]t is a potent and unusual title—one used throughout the Old Testament (thirty times in Isaiah) for God (‘the Holy One of Israel’), who defends his people and redeems them (Isa. 41:14; 43:14-15).”¹²⁶
- Craig S. Keener: “John may prefer the ‘Holy One of God’ title (cf. Rev 3:7; Acts 3:14; applied to Jesus in earlier gospel tradition by beings with superhuman knowledge—Mark 1:24) to convey a diversity of christological titles and roles (cf. John 1:1, 9, 18, 34, 36)...The Holy One was especially a title for God himself in the OT [2 Kings 19:22; Job 6:10; Psalm 71:22; 78:41; 89:18; Proverbs 9:10; 30:3; Jeremiah 50:29; 51:5; Ezekiel 39:7; Hosea 11:9, 12; Habakkuk 1:12; 3:3; and especially in Isaiah (1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:17, 20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19, 23; 30:11-12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 30:25; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14, 15; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5-6; 60:9, 14)] and in early Judaism (cf. also 17:11; 1 John 2:20; Rev 4:8; 6:10). It nevertheless could function as an acceptable title for one of God’s servants with conjoined with ‘of God.’”¹²⁷

It is fair to recognize, as Michaels states it, “‘The Holy One of God’ is virtually synonymous with ‘the Son of God,’ acknowledging and confirming what Jesus himself had said again and again, that the Father ‘sent’ him (vv. 29, 57; also 3:17; 4:34; 5:23, 24, 30, 36, 37, 38; 6:38, 39, 44) to bring ‘words of life eternal’ to those who would listen.”¹²⁸ In light of the significant departure of many presumed followers in John 6:66, Peter confessing Yeshua to be “the Holy One of God” in John 6:68 was surely substantial! And, it does have to be noted how in spite of “Holy One of God” being a title easily associated with “Holy One of Israel” in the Tanach, that it can be applied to various human agents sent from God. Yet, Yeshua being called

¹²⁴ Morris, *John*, 390.

¹²⁵ Kruse, *John*, 179.

¹²⁶ Burge, *John*, 204.

¹²⁷ Keener, *John*, 697.

¹²⁸ Michaels, 416.

“the Holy One of God” is not isolated; Yeshua is also the Daniel 7:14-15 pre-existent Son of Man (John 6:62) who provides eternal life. Readers of John’s Gospel continue to be invited to investigate more into the nature of this Yeshua, and what His relationship with the Heavenly Father actually is. When more and more information is tabulated, it becomes much clearer that Yeshua is indeed integrated into the Divine Identity as God.

John 7:14-18

“Yeshua Does Not Seek Self-Serving Glory”

“But when it was now the midst of the feast Yeshua went up into the temple, and began to teach. The Jews then were astonished, saying, ‘How has this man become learned, having never been educated?’ So Yeshua answered them and said, ‘My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.’”

In a scene which took place during *Sukkot* or the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2), Yeshua is witnessed teaching in the Temple complex. Yeshua is a controversial figure (John 7:12), doubtlessly because His messages challenged much of the status quo, as well as the character and motives of the Jewish religious leaders (John 7:13). The teaching style and motives of Yeshua do not only speak to His uniqueness as the Messiah of Israel, but the uniqueness of His service, bearing some importance on Christology.

Those encountering Yeshua are astounded, and so they ask, “How does this man know so much without having studied?” (John 7:15, CJB/CJSB), as many of the Jerusalemites had to have considered Yeshua to be an uneducated simpleton from Galilee. Yet, they recognize that Yeshua’s teachings and words have a significant dimension to them. Obviously making reference to His Heavenly Father, Yeshua replies, “My teaching is not from Me, but from Him who sent Me” (John 7:16, TLV). Yeshua raises the further, critical point, “If anyone wants to do His will, he will know whether My teaching comes from God or it is Myself speaking” (John 7:17, TLV). What is important to recognize here, is that Yeshua is not some free, independent agent, only out for some self-serving interest or self-promotion. *What Yeshua does has greater importance than just teaching an important series of messages to those in the Temple.* As Yeshua stated in John 7:18,

“He who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but he who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood” (John 7:18, RSV).

Yeshua is not just a teacher in the Temple complex, only out to fulfill His own selfish ambition; Yeshua is out to fulfill the purposes and interests for which He was sent by God the Father. Kruse makes the point how Yeshua’s line of argumentation was similar to various Rabbinical contemporaries, remarking,

“His opponents would have agreed with this statement. In their own teaching they cited the authority of others—rabbi so-and-so says this; rabbi so-and-so says that. Not to do so would be arrogant and evidence of seeking honour for oneself. Jesus did not appeal to the rabbis for his authority; nor was he arrogant....Jesus claimed he worked for the Father’s honour alone, and therefore he was a ‘man of truth’ and there was ‘nothing false about him.’”¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Kruse, *John*, 185.